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http://www.kokomotribune.com/opinion/editorial-new-net-neutrality-threat/article_b89a32fa-ba76-539b-bc2b-9c6452703627.html

Editorial: New net neutrality threat

After a hard-fought court battle waged by a group of telecommunications companies, a federal judge Thursday issued another major victory to proponents of net neutrality.

“A federal court has decided not to block the government’s new net neutrality rules from going into effect, handing Internet providers, such as Verizon and Comcast, another defeat in an ongoing legal fight with the FCC,” reported Brian Fung of The Washington Post on Thursday. “The decision clears the way for the FCC to enforce its ban on the slowing and blocking of Web traffic, even as it seeks to fend off a legal attack against the regulations.”

Net neutrality is the principle that all Internet traffic should be equal, regardless of source. Since February when FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler announced the plan to regulate the Internet like a public utility under Title II of the Communications Act and Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, these corporations and their allies have been pulling their collective hair out trying to stop it.

Now, after all that, House Republicans have launched a new attack on net neutrality; this time through the purse strings.

“Many Republican lawmakers hated regulations that the FCC approved earlier this year to prevent cable and phone companies from creating fast and slow lanes on the Internet. Now, they are trying to undermine those rules through an appropriations bill,” reported Vikas Bajaj of The New York Times on Friday. “House Republicans have introduced a bill that would effectively suspend the commission’s net neutrality rules. ... The agency could not use its budget to enforce the rules until there is a ‘final disposition’ of three court cases brought against it by the telecommunications industry. That could take several years, because these cases might well end up at the Supreme Court.”

The huge companies and those who lobby for them hate net neutrality and will stop at nothing to halt its implementation for one simple reason: once people realize how it benefits them, they won’t want to give it up. Internet providers would love to create haves and have nots by charging more for faster delivery.

These House Republicans who are so against net neutrality should stop shilling for these greedy corporations and start standing up for the little guys.